

NGA Grant Proposal: Governor's Summit on Early Childhood

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Grant Details

- Five grants of **\$10,000** will be awarded this year
- Six page application, plus a letter of intent from the Governor, due **March 1, 2006**

Successful Proposals

- Demonstrate strong gubernatorial commitment to supporting a policy agenda that incorporates the core principles, policy framework, and recommendations from *Building the Foundation for Bright Futures: Final Report of the NGA Task Force on School Readiness*
- Set clear goals and objectives for using the summit to advance a state policy agenda and guarantee a strong commitment to turning momentum into concrete action following the summit
- Connect with the SECCS grant and Build Initiative work being done in our state
- Communicate what we have, what we want, why we want it, how these two pieces (have and want) fit together, and who the audience needs to be to push this momentum into action.

Washington's Proposal

- We will hold the summit in **October, 2006**, to coincide with a larger education summit being sponsored by Washington Learns, and to build on the momentum of the final report from the Early Learning Council.
- The summit will take place over two days, either before or after the WA Learns events:
 - Day 1: Afternoon keynote 1, social mixer, dinner groups
 - Day 2: Breakfast speaker, keynote 2, AM workshops, lunch, PM workshops, keynote 3
- The Governor will be one of the three keynote speakers

Possible Summit Topic Areas or Themes

- A. **Honoring Diversity to Help Close the Achievement Gap**
- B. **Investing in Early Learning as Economic Development**
- C. **Keeping Communities Connected around Early Learning**
- D. **Investigating 0-3 Early Learning and Parent Support Needs**

Decision Points for the Early Learning Council

1. Which of the four areas do you prefer us to present as the focus of this summit?
2. Does the timing and structure make sense and match with your plans for the Council's work?

KEY MESSAGES FOR ALL FOUR TOPIC AREAS:

A. Honoring Diversity to Help Close the Achievement Gap

Key Messages: Due to the continuously changing demographics in Washington, it is essential and timely to better understand and respond to the diversity of families in our state, particularly with regard to the work that is being done on the next iteration of the Benchmarks. Specifically, we need to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability to meet the needs of diverse groups of children. This is crucial for us to truly support all families. Understanding and addressing how cultural differences in early child rearing practices affect children's development, particularly in terms of school readiness and success, is essential for us to ensure the success of every child (including infants and toddlers, children of Tribes or other distinct cultures, and children who have special needs).

B. Investing in Early Learning as Economic Development

Key Messages: The significant Return on Investment (ROI) in early care and education has been well documented in recent research in economics as well as child development. Leading economists have repeatedly and convincingly shown how children's high quality early care and education experiences can benefit society and participating children, and this is particularly true for children at risk, not only in developmental ways, but also in financial ways. In fact, some high quality early education programs have been shown to have an ROI as high as 17 percent. There is strong political momentum currently surrounding the presumed creation of the new Early Learning Department, as well as in the recently developed public and private partnership to benefit early learning. It is essential to capitalize on this momentum and to strengthen our state's capacity and infrastructure to promote school readiness by investing in quality care and early learning opportunities.

C. Keeping Communities Connected Around Early Learning

Key Messages: "Think Globally and Act Locally." Together, we must find a way to work better and smarter to stretch our dollars, accelerate our momentum, and harness the strengths of existing community level public-private partnerships. This is essential for us to develop innovative solutions that increase coordination and improve planning. Local entities such as Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) programs; Head Start (HS)/ Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP); child care centers; family child care homes; family, friend, and neighbor care; public health; United Way; municipalities; civic organizations; and school districts should all be a part of an integrated approach to building an early learning system.

D. Investigating 0-3 Early Learning and Parent Support Needs

Key Messages: Identifying and responding to the needs parents have as their child's first and most important teacher, particularly during the time in which the child's brain has its greatest potential to develop, would provide a much needed service to parents and caregivers of our youngest children. It is essential to identify and map out needs specific to children ages zero-to-three and how the Early Learning Council and the presumed new Early Learning Department can help meet these needs. Such action could move our state forward by providing a clear focus for our work on this population. Creating opportunities to engage parents and others who care for infants and toddlers, regardless of whether their principal involvement with young children is via formal child care or preschool, would augment the work that the Council is doing in the preschool and transition to k-12 populations.

A. Honoring Diversity to Help Close the Achievement Gap

Key Messages: Due to the continuously changing demographics in Washington, it is essential and timely to better understand and respond to the diversity of families in our state, particularly with regard to the work that is being done on the next iteration of the Benchmarks. Specifically, we need to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability to meet the needs of diverse groups of children. This is crucial for us to truly support all families. Understanding and addressing how cultural differences in early child rearing practices affect children's development, particularly in terms of school readiness and success, is essential for us to ensure the success of every child (including infants and toddlers, children of Tribes or other distinct cultures, and children who have special needs).

Audience: Early care and education caregivers, advocates, and community leaders (e.g., Child Care Resource & Referral)

Intended Fit (NGA Framework): Ready Schools, Ready Children, Ready Families

Intended Strategies (SECCS):

(I). Early Care and Education/Child Care

- culturally sensitive and appropriate benchmarks,
- a QRIS that promotes an anti-bias curriculum
- high quality professional development for caregivers

(II). Social, Emotional, and Mental Health

- promote caregivers' knowledge of social, emotional, and mental health of young children
- promote existing programs' awareness and implementation of models of services and supports for young families that are effective, culturally competent and community-based

Intended Results (Build Initiative):

(I). System Changes

Increased systems' recognition of families' role as the primary nurturer of their children
Improved ability of families to obtain quality child care & preschool programs to meet families' needs

Parent & Caregiver Changes

Increased understanding of what children need for optimal health & development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive, & language)

Child Changes

Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten healthy & ready for school, including: 1) physical well-being, health and motor development; 2) social & emotional development; 3) approaches toward learning; 4) cognition & general knowledge; and 5) language, communication, & literacy

(II). System Changes

- Increased availability or appropriate and coordinated mental health services for children

Parent & Caregiver Changes

- Improved understanding and practice of nurturing behaviors to promote children's optimal social-emotional development and mental health

Child Changes

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten with social/emotional skills

B. Investing in Early Learning as Economic Development

Key Messages: The significant Return on Investment (ROI) in early care and education has been well documented in recent research in economics as well as child development. Leading economists have repeatedly and convincingly shown how children's high quality early care and education experiences, and this is particularly true for children at risk, can benefit society and participating children not only in developmental ways, but also in financial ways. In fact, some high quality early education programs have been shown to have an ROI as high as 17 percent. There is strong political momentum currently surrounding the presumed creation of the new Early Learning Department, as well as in the recently developed public and private partnership to benefit early learning. It is essential to capitalize on this momentum and to strengthen our state's capacity and infrastructure to promote school readiness by investing in quality care and early learning opportunities.

Notes:

State

- Government leads efforts (public-private partnerships) to strengthen state's capacity and infrastructure to promote school readiness, and to seek ongoing public and political support

Communities

- Whether families have access in their communities to information, health services, and quality care and early learning opportunities
- Public assets
- Civic & cultural venues
- States can provide resources, guidance, and TA to local leaders, and respond to local initiatives to address comprehensive needs of young children
- Set goals and track progress

Audience: Business leaders

Intended Fit (NGA Framework): Ready States, Ready Communities

Intended Strategies (SECCS): Funding as one of the key resources (leveraging public/private resources to move the early childhood agenda forward)

Intended Results (BUILD): Development and sustainability of new or enhanced public-private partnerships to support strategies across the four SECC key domains: (1) Access to health insurance and medical homes; (2) social, emotional, and mental health; (3) early care and education/child care; and (4) parenting information and support

C. Keeping Communities Connected Around Early Learning

Key Messages: “Think Globally and Act Locally.” Together, we must find a way to work better and smarter to stretch our dollars, accelerate our momentum, and harness the strengths of existing community level public-private partnerships. This is essential for us to develop innovative solutions that increase coordination and improve planning. Local entities such as Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) programs; Head Start (HS)/ Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP); child care centers; family child care homes; family, friend, and neighbor care; public health; United Way; municipalities; civic organizations; and school districts should all be a part of an integrated approach to building an early learning system.

Audience: State and local community leaders

Intended Fit (NGA Framework): Ready States, Ready Communities

Intended Strategies (SECCS): Enhancing a communication network so that state-level action and planning for young children is grounded in the reality of local communities and addresses the most pressing challenges that local communities face in developing their early learning systems. Allowing providers and users to virtually and directly engage in an exchange of information and experiences at the local and statewide levels. Promoting continued development of a local early learning system.

Intended Results (BUILD): Develop user interface options that help to create communication networks, and provide opportunities for communities to share tools, successes and relationship. Development could include user-friendly “live” updating features so that communities statewide can share and borrow their approaches, tools, and processes across the state.

D. Investigating 0-3 Early Learning and Parent Support Needs

Key Messages: Identifying and responding to the needs parents have as their child's first and most important teacher, particularly during the time in which the child's brain has its greatest potential to develop, would provide a much needed service to parents and caregivers of our youngest children. It is essential to identify and map out needs specific to children ages zero-to-three and how the Early Learning Council and the presumed new Early Learning Department can help meet these needs. Such action could move our state forward by providing a clear focus for our work on this population. Creating opportunities to engage parents and others who care for infants and toddlers, regardless of whether their principal involvement with young children is via formal child care or preschool, would augment the work that the Council is doing in the preschool and transition to k-12 populations.

Audience: Parents, early care and education caregivers, advocates, and community leaders (e.g., Child Care Resource & Referral)

Intended Fit (NGA Framework): Ready Families, Ready Children

Intended Strategies (SECCS):

(I). Early Care and Education/Child Care

- benchmarks, milestones for infants and toddlers
- a QRIS that promotes quality, rated care
- support high quality professional development services and opportunities for caregivers
- develop capacity within the early care and education systems to engage in family support

(II). Social, Emotional, and Mental Health

- promote caregivers' knowledge of social, emotional, and mental health of young children

Intended Results (per SECCS):

(I). System Changes

- Increased systems' recognition of families' role as the primary nurturer of their children
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Parent & Caregiver Changes

- Increased understanding of what children need for optimal health & development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive, & language)

Child Changes

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- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten with social/emotional skills